NORTHCENTRAL UNIVERSITY
ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET

Student: **Michael Higley-Vance**

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETELY FILLED IN

Follow these procedures: If requested by your instructor, please include an assignment cover sheet. This will become the first page of your assignment. In addition, your assignment header should include your last name, first initial, course code, dash, and assignment number. This should be left justified, with the page number right justified. For example:

DoeJXXX0000-1	1

Save a copy of your assignments: You may need to re-submit an assignment at your instructor's request. Make sure you save your files in accessible location.

Academic integrity: All work submitted in each course must be your own original work. This includes all assignments, exams, term papers, and other projects required by your instructor. Knowingly submitting another person's work as your own, without properly citing the source of the work, is considered plagiarism. This will result in an unsatisfactory grade for the work submitted or for the entire course. It may also result in academic dismissal from the University.

EDU7702-8	**Dr. Mark Kelso**
Online Learning Communities	**Activity #8: Signature Assignment – Research Proposal**

Comments: This assignment should really be allowed two weeks to complete. If I wasn't already ahead with my assignments I don't think I would have been able to finish this in just one week.

Faculty Use Only

<Faculty comments here>

Hi Michael,

Outstanding work on your Research Proposal. During this course you definitely worked hard and are very close to having a credible CP. There are a few areas below that need your attention.

I provided a lot of feedback, so please take your time and carefully address each item. You definitely want to apply my feedback as you continue to craft your CP in your future courses. As you have seen, this assignment is very important to you as you are in the process of crafting a credible research proposal which will lead you to a successful research study.

In future courses, your research proposal will turn into your Concept Paper, which will eventually turn into your Dissertation Proposal, which will then turn into your Dissertation Manuscript after you complete your research. A well-crafted research proposal guarantees success and you are almost there! It has been a pleasure working with you and I appreciate your hard work and dedication. I also appreciate the kind words! I can see no reason to deduct any points, so your score is 30 points. Good luck to you in the future. Stay motivated. You can do this!

Mark

<Faculty Name>Kelso <Grade Earned>30 <Writing Score>9 <Date Graded>6/16/14

Research Proposal[1]

Since 1951 technology has slowly been making its way into education reform. By 1986 25% of high schools were using PCs for college and career guidance. Since 1997 the growth and impact of the Internet and technology has changed the way people live their lives. With the increase in Internet use and the growth of web-based applications, technology is vastly changing the way educational institutions view student learning (Huang, & Huang, 2012; Tirrell & Quick, 2012). Over the last two decades researchers have begun examining the advances in educational technology (Oliver & Stallings, 2014), the advantages and disadvantages it has in the traditional classroom environment, and the influence technology has on student behavior (Barbour et al., 2011; Huang, & Huang, 2012; Minter, 2011; Tirrell & Quick, 2012; van Deursen, 2011; Whelan, 2008).

Students in traditional classroom environments depend on the teacher to deliver and guide the flow of instruction, as well as manage and maintain classroom behaviors. In a traditional classroom environment students view the teacher as the authority and expert conveying information through face-to-face only interactions (Martin, 2009). However, this is not the case in a blended learning environment where there is a shift in the student-teacher relationship, the educational model, and learning theory. A successful blended environment balances the traditional classroom setting with a blended e-learning model, which meets the needs of most digital natives (Barbour et al., 2011; Minter, 2011; Whelan, 2008).

Blended learning [2]combines face-to-face and online learning into one instructional learning approach. Educational institutions [3]are beginning to offer blended learning alternatives to traditional classroom instruction (Barbour et al., 2011; Minter, 2011). There is currently little research to support how incorporating a blended learning environment, within the traditional

classroom, can affect student problem behaviors (Losen, Martinez, & University of California, 2013). However, the influence information and communication technologies (ICT) have had on traditional classroom practices and student behaviors have generated a need for understanding how teaching and learning happen best using a blended learning approach (Barbour et al., 2011; Minter, 2011). It does.

Blended learning environments provide a number of benefits to students and teachers. Specific benefits include: improved learning (Donavant, 2009), enhanced communication (Abrami, Bernard, Bures, Borokhovski, & Tamim, 2010; Barbour et al., 2011; Minter, 2011), improved learning efficiency (Cabrera-Lozoya, Cerdan, Cano, Garcia-Sanchez, & Lujan, 2012; Chen & Lien, 2011; Huang, Lin, & Huang, 2012), and positively affects student learning behaviors (Bhuasiri, Xaymoungkhoun, Zo, Rho, & Ciganek, 2011; Haythornthwaite et al., 2007; McIntosh, Flannery, Sugai, Braun, & Cochrane, 2008). [4]Studies have shown students who participate in blended learning environments learn more effectively and efficiently, as indicated by student assessment outcomes (Huang, Lin, & Huang, 2012; Martinez-Caro, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

Research conducted by McIntosh et al. (2008) showed that social behaviors of middle school students had a significant impact on student achievement[5]. ACT [6](2013) reported that almost 50% of all middle school problem behaviors affect overall academic achievement. Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade student problem behaviors (McIntosh et al., 2008), and the discipline related to those behaviors, are important factors, which influence over all student learning outcomes and future academic readiness (ACT, 2013; McIntosh et al., 2008). High school readiness is one such outcome that is impacted by problem behaviors at the middle school level (Losen, Martinez, & University of California, 2013). Additionally, research into the effects of

middle school problem behaviors on high school academic outcomes (Casillas et al., 2013) identified problem behaviors at the middle school level negatively impact high school graduation (Karakus, Salkever, Slade, Ialongo, & Stuart, 2012[7]). Problem behaviors present an additional factor to high school graduation because disruptive behaviors typically lead to out of school suspensions and expulsions, which only exacerbates the problem (Tobin & Sugai, 1999[8]).

Educators agree that in order to increase graduation rates problem behaviors at the middle and high school levels must be addressed (Losen, Martinez, & University of California, 2013). The challenge is for educators in middle and high school to identify ways in which problem behaviors can be managed within the classroom environment. Solutions for dealing with problem behaviors in the classroom are potentially valuable later in high school for increasing high school graduation rates (Losen, Martinez, & University of California, 2013; McIntosh, 2008, McLeod & Kaiser, 2004).

Shearod, Ross, and Cheung (2012) suggest educational institutions overcome student problem behaviors by providing students a learning experience where technology and classroom instruction meet, and is the primary form of instructional delivery. The specific problem is to investigate whether or not a blended learning environment decreases middle school student problem behaviors, which, according to the research will increase graduation rates. The literature reviewed, supports incorporating elements of blended learning into the traditional classroom in order to minimize classroom disruptions and inappropriate student social behaviors (Barbour et al., 2011; Minter, 2011; Shearod, Ross, & Cheung, 2012; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2011). If this study is not performed graduation rates will continue to be affected by problem behaviors at the middle school leve[9]l (Act, 2013; Losen, Martinez, & University of California, 2013; McIntosh, 2008, McLeod & Kaiser, 2004; Tobin & Sugai, 1999).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study is to investigate whether or not a blended learning environment has an affect on student satisfaction and motivation. Additionally, this study will investigate whether there is a decrease in middle school problem behaviors as a result of participating in a blended learning environment where teaching and learning is driven by primarily technology enriched learning applications and resources. The study will be located in middle Tennessee, specifically targeting one area middle school. An experimental group of approximately 30 students will be selected prior to the start of school. Three separate data pieces will be collected throughout the study, which include: (a) student discipline records (SDR) reporting on student problem behaviors, (b) anonymous online student surveys, and (c) student achievement scores. This protocol will be used to gather information about student behaviors, motivation, satisfaction, and academic progression for study evaluation.

Missing per the CP template:

1. G*Power Analysis

2. Description of variables

3. Data analysis (basic info)

Research Questions[10]

The research questions identified for this study are included to isolate the correlation between the independent variable – a blended approach to teaching and learning, and the dependent variables regarding student satisfaction, motivation, and inappropriate social behaviors. [11]Associated with the problem and purpose statements, the following research questions will be addressed:

Q1. Does satisfaction of middle school students, as measured by an anonymous student survey, positively increase over time as students participate in a blended learning approach to classroom instruction?

This question will be answered using an anonymous online student survey, which will collect evidence on levels of student satisfaction related to the blended learning environment. The survey will be presented to students every three weeks and results will be converted into ordinal values for the purposes of quantifying the levels of satisfaction indicated.[12]

Q2. Does motivation of middle school students, as measured by an anonymous student survey and student academic records, increase when students participate in a blended learning approach to classroom instruction?

This question will be answered using an anonymous online student survey, which will collect evidence on student perceptions of motivation related to the blended learning environment. The survey will be presented to students every three weeks and results will be converted into ordinal values for the purposes of quantifying perceptions of motivation. In addition to student perceptions, student academic records will be used to determine the frequency of student work completed.[13]

Q3. Do inappropriate behaviors of middle school students, as measured by student discipline records (SDR), decrease when students participate in a blended learning approach to classroom instruction?

This question will be answered using teacher and school discipline records, which will be kept on every student participating in the study. Data related to specific problem behaviors, frequency of behaviors, and consequences will be collected every nine weeks and results converted into ordinal values for the purposes of quantifying the information collected.[14]

Hypotheses

By collecting student behavior information, using an anonymous online survey, and taking into consideration student academic assessment outcomes the hypotheses will be tested. Each question addresses a null hypothesis with no expectation of a significant relationship and an alternate hypothesis that proposes that a significant correlation does exist between the independent variable – a blended approach to teaching and learning, and the dependent variables – of student satisfaction, motivation, and inappropriate social behaviors.[15]

$H1_0$.[16] A measure of student satisfaction is statistically equivalent and unchanged when teaching and learning is driven primarily by technology enriched learning applications and resources.

$H1_a$. A measure of student satisfaction is statistically different and positively affected when teaching and learning is driven primarily by technology enriched learning applications and resources.

$H2_0$. A measure of student motivation is statistically equivalent and unchanged when teaching and learning is driven primarily by technology enriched learning applications and resources.

$H2_a$. A measure of student motivation is statistically different and positively affected when teaching and learning is driven primarily by technology enriched learning applications and resources.

$H3_0$. A measure of inappropriate student behaviors is statistically equivalent and unchanged when teaching and learning is driven primarily by technology enriched learning applications and resources.

$H3_{a.}$ A measure of inappropriate student behaviors is statistically different and decreases when teaching and learning is driven primarily by technology enriched learning applications and resources.

Definition of Terms[17]

Blended learning. The concept, blended learning, can have multiple meanings depending on the context in which it is being used to frame a viewpoint or conduct research. This study defines blended learning as the integration of asynchronous online only and traditional face-to-face collaborative and interactive learning activities, which can be experienced in either online only learning environments or traditional classroom settings (Barbour et al., 2011; Diaz & Diniz, 2014).

Problem behaviors. For the purpose of this study, the term problem behaviors, also referred to as discipline behaviors or misbehaviors, refer to unacceptable middle school student behaviors (Bobrow, 2002; McLeod & Kaiser, 2004; Shearod, Ross, & Cheung, 2012), which could include but not limited to: cursing, classroom disruptions, transition disruptions, disrespect towards school employees, bullying, or disobedience.

You will need a Literature Review of approx.. 2000 to 2500 words in your CP.

Research Method

This study will consist of a quantitative correlational research design. Given a correlational design, this study will examine the extent to which the independent variable – a blended learning approach to teaching and learning, is related to differences in various dependent variables – of student satisfaction, motivation, and inappropriate social behaviors. The research will use a regression-discontinuity design (RDD), which will help determine, through a pretest-posttest design, the casual effects blended learning have on student discipline. Unlike other

research designs, the experimental group in RDD requires that students will be assigned to the blended program based on a student's discipline history during the previous school year.

Blended classroom instruction is scheduled during the normal school year and during the normal school day of 7:00am to 2:30pm. The experimental group will be limited to thirty participants who earned 45 or more discipline points during the previous school year. Students who earned forty-five or more discipline points during the previous school year will be considered potential participants of this study. Behaviors considered include: cursing, classroom disruptions, disruptions during transitions, disrespect towards school employees, bullying, and disobedience. Students who have earned discipline points from violent, dangerous, and illegal behaviors during the previous two school years will not be considered for inclusion in this study. This is good information. Make sure that you justify your research methodology over qualitative and mixed methods.

Data Collection and Analysis

This quantitative study will include the collection of three different data sets: (a) student discipline records (SDR) reporting on student problem behaviors[18], (b) anonymous online student surveys, and (c) student achievement scores. [19] Behavioral data will be collected in two parts: the first through teacher recorded discipline observations [20]and the second through administrative kept student discipline records. Student behavior data will be collected once every nine~~9~~ weeks. Data regarding student perceptions will be the second data piece collected, and will consist of an identical anonymous online survey presented to students every three~~3~~ weeks. This survey is aligned with the school system's progress reporting schedule, which will communicate student academic and behavioral progress. The final data piece includes student academic achievement outcomes, which will be collected using student test scores from a variety

of assessment benchmarks throughout the school year. Student achievement data will be collected every nine~~9~~ weeks and is also aligned with the school system's progress reporting schedule.

Student problem behavior data will be collected in two parts: the first through teacher recorded discipline observations and the second through administrative kept student discipline records. Teachers will record students' negative behaviors by following four main teacher led discipline steps before referring the student to an administrator for an administrator issued discipline consequence. Teacher led discipline involves four teacher steps, which teachers must follow before referring a student to a school administrator. Teachers and administrators will use the district approved *Student Code of Conduct*, which outlines inappropriate student behaviors as the steps listed below are followed:

1. Teachers will give students a verbal warning when problem behaviors occur.
2. If problem behaviors continue, teachers will offer students a redirect, which might include moving the student's seat or placing the student out into the hallway.
3. If problem behaviors continue after steps one and two have been followed, the teacher should contact a parent either by phone or by sending home a behavior note. The parent contact should include information regarding the specific problem behavior being demonstrated.
4. Finally, if problem behaviors continue after the first 3 steps the teacher should refer the student to an administrator for an administrator issued consequence and discipline point assignment.

A report from Power School, the district's student information archival system, outlining the problem behaviors, the discipline points, and consequence will be collected each nine~~9~~ weeks.

This student discipline information will provide quantitative data representing student problem behaviors and the discipline points, which have been assigned to each recorded behavior and student.[21]

A student survey will be initiated every three~~3~~ weeks and will collect student perceptions of satisfaction and motivation using a checklist and rating scale. Survey questions were developed to examine five factors of student satisfaction regarding blended learning (Aman, 2009), which include: (1) outcomes, (2) assessment, (3) resource materials, (4) student interaction, and (5) technology. Each of the five factors will be used to address the questions developed for this study. Use a Likert Scale

Finally, academic records will be collected and analyzed every nine~~9~~ weeks to help determine if each of the hypotheses is significantly supported or negated. A report from Power School, the district's student information archival system summarizing each student's academic progress will be collected each nine~~9~~ weeks. Student academic progress will provide quantitative data, which represents the students' level of academic achievements during the last ~~9~~ nine weeks. Collecting these three varying data sets will help to determine whether or not a blended learning environment has a significant affect on student behaviors.

Operational Definition of Variables

The independent variable for this study is the use of a blended learning approach to teaching and learning in the classroom. Learning and teaching in this environment will include the integration of asynchronous online only and traditional face-to-face collaborative and interactive learning activities. The measure of student achievement; a decrease or inactivity of student problem behaviors; and student motivation and satisfaction are the dependent variables in this study.

Independent variable – instructional approach. Blended learning combines face-to-face instruction with technology enriched learning applications to promote actively engaged student learning experiences (Naaj, Nachouki, & Ankit, 2012; Schuitema, Peetsma, & van der Veen, 2014). This study includes a balance of these teaching and learning practices, which are delivered to the experimental group within a traditional middle school classroom setting[22]. The blended environment will be considered a nominal variable, as no participation will occur with the control group. However, blended learning will be presented continuously to the experimental group. The instructional approach variable has two attributes: continuous participation (1) and no participation (0). OK

Dependent variable – satisfaction. Student satisfaction of the learning environment has been chosen as a dependent variable. Research indicates that student satisfaction is an important factor in measuring the quality of learning in a blended environment (Gunarwardena, Linder-VanBerschot, LaPointe, & Rao, 2010; Naaj, Nachouki, & Ankit, 2012). Conversely, participating in a blended learning environment also promotes student satisfaction (Poon, 2013). Student satisfaction is a construct that will be derived from anonymous online surveys presented to the experimental group throughout the school year. Surveys will consist of several questions regarding components of the blended learning environment; which include student satisfaction with technology, instruction, and learning activities.[23] The student satisfaction construct is a preference variable, which will allow students to rank order specific components of the learning environment as 1st, 2nd, or third choices. Additionally, discrete variables will be included to allow students to rank, in order of importance, their preference of instructional strategies and technology use.

Dependent variable – motivation. Student motivation has been chosen as a dependent variable. Research indicates that as student engagement increases, so does student self-regulated learning (Schuitema, Peetsma, & van der Veen, 2014). Student motivation is closely related to interactivities (Gunawardena et al., 2010; Kozub, 2010; Martinez-Caro, 2009) and technology used to complete assigned tasks (Schuitema, Peetsma, & van der Veen, 2014). Student motivation is a construct that will be derived from anonymous online surveys presented to the experimental group.[24] The surveys will consist of several questions regarding components of the blended learning environment, each regarding motivation to use technology to complete assignments or participate in instructional learning tasks. The student satisfaction construct is a preference variable rating specific components of the learning environment using a 1st, 2nd, or third choice answer choice.

Dependent variable – academic achievement. Student academic achievement has been chosen as a dependent variable. Research indicates that student achievement outcomes predict the quality of blended learning instruction (Naaj, Nachouki, & Ankit, 2012; Poon, 2013; Schuitema, Peetsma, & van der Veen, 2014).[25] Students' academic achievement is a construct that will be derived from academic records of students in the experimental group. The student academic construct is a ratio variable varying from 0 to 100%.

Dependent variable – discipline points. Student discipline points have been chosen as a dependent variable. Research indicates that student problem behaviors have a significant impact on student achievement (ACT, 2013; McIntosh et al., 2008). [26]Discipline points earned throughout the school year are a construct that will be derived from student discipline records (SDR). SDR will be collected from both the experimental and control groups. The SDR

construct is an ordinal variable varying from 0 to 75. After a student receives 75 points he or she is no longer eligible to participate in the study. OK

Measurement

Data for this research will be collected at the accumulation of each progress reporting period or every three~~3~~ weeks. The measurement instrument used in this study will be a multi-trait-multi-method approach. This method includes content and construct validity. For this study construct validity measures student behavioral and academic achievement, while content validity measures student perceptions of the learning environment. Additionally, ordinal, nominal, ratio, and preference scale values will be used to compare the dependent variables with the independent variable. More specifically, Spearman's nonparametric rank correlation coefficient will be used to convert values and measure the statistical dependence between the independent variable and dependent variables. A rank correlation scale assesses how well the relationship between two variables can be described. A perfect correlation of +1 or -1 occurs when each of the variables is a perfect function of the other. This correlation calculation is appropriate for the following dependent variables: student satisfaction, student motivation, academic performance, and accumulation of discipline points.

The first data piece will include direct teacher observations and administrative records of student discipline, which places a number value to specific problem behaviors. Each time a problem behavior is repeated the point value assigned to the problem behavior demonstrated for by that student increases by 5[27] points. For example if a student is disrespectful to the teacher for the second time the point value assigned to that behavior is 10 points. Discipline points will be conveyed through ordinal values 0 to 75. The greater the discipline point-value the more frequent problem behaviors have been displayed by a student.

The second data piece will consist of 12 anonymous online student surveys completed over the course of the school year. The anonymous surveys will be used to collect data related to student satisfaction of learning and motivation. The survey will include various questions types: a 5-point Likert scale, 5 = strongly agree to strongly disagree = 1, a rank order scale, 1st, 2nd, and third choices; as well as preference scale, which allows the ordering of specific answer choices from most used to least used. OK

The final data piece will consist of both the experimental and control student achievement scores, which will be collected and compared to determine the effectiveness of the blended learning environment. Student achievement results will be collected from the academic records of students in the experimental and control groups. Achievement scores will be reported as a ratio varying from 0 to 100%. OK

In your CP, you will provide a summary for this section.

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